Column 453

The 10th Anniversary yourYukon Christmas Quiz

by Claire Eamer, Sarah Locke and Erling Friis-Baastad

Hard to believe, but this is yourYukon's 10th Christmas -- and it's time, yet again, to test your knowledge of all things environmental in the Yukon.

Have you been reading closely? Have you been reading at all? If not, don't panic. The quiz questions are based on yourYukon columns printed in 2005 in the Yukon News.

Even if you haven't clipped and saved the 2005 columns (and we're sure you meant to save them!), all is not lost. You can find them in the yourYukon archives.

Take the test and add up the number of right answers to determine if you're:

- *Whizzus borealis* (12-15)
- *Kinda smartiis* (8-11)
- *Gotta studius* (4-7)
- *Cheechakus yukonensis* (0-3)

P.S. Give yourself an extra point just for reading the column, a 10th anniversary gift from Environment Canada!

1. Why do dabbling ducks like shallow ponds?

    a. Because the water doesn't go over the tops of their rubber boots.
    b. They can only feed as deep as their necks will reach.
    c. Shallow ponds are safer for ducklings still learning to swim.
    d. The mud on the pond bottom cleans parasites off their feet.

2. Alien plant species are appearing in the territory -- along roadsides, in gardens and even in flower boxes. Should we:

    a. Inform the Canadian Space Agency?
    b. Forget about them as there's nothing we can do about them anyway?
    c. Welcome them as a sign of biodiversity?
    d. Attempt to prevent their spread as they can choke out native species?

3. Strontium analysis of an otolith can help scientists determine:

    a. The age of a sedimentary layer of rock.
    b. The direction in which a seam of gold-bearing ore runs.
    c. The mental health of a German stonemason.
    d. The life history of a fish.

4. Trees like the paper birch defend themselves against snowshoe hares by:

2008-04913/

a. A biomechanical reaction that allows them to swack hares that approach too close.
b. Emitting chemical odours that enslave passing wolves, forcing them to act as bodyguards.
c. Producing large quantities of gooey resin glands containing a chemical that hares hate.
d. Dying out over large parts of the boreal forest when hare numbers are high.

5. The greatest threats to the wood bison of the southwest Yukon are:

a. Old age and hunters.
b. Wolves and coyotes.
c. Blackflies and mosquitoes.
d. Grizzlies and cougars.

6. By exhuming the fossil nests of prehistoric ground squirrels we can discover:

a. Natural cures for obesity.
b. Evidence of the first human settlements in Beringia.
c. Proof of Noah's flood.
d. Clues as to how dramatic environmental change affects ecosystems.

7. What are eskers?

a. Topographical facial hair.
b. Glaciofluvial landforms formed by retreating glaciers.
c. Ridges left behind by giant burrowing moles that went extinct after the last Ice Age.
d. Long, dry, grassy ridges that provide travel routes for wildlife in the boreal forest.
e. b and d.

8. What does chionophile mean?

a. A lover of all things Oriental.
b. An animal that is a snow-lover and thrives in winter.
c. A collector of antique porcelain.
d. a and c.

9. What does the term "mast" refer to in the northern boreal forest?

a. A white spruce tree with a straight thick trunk.
b. A black spruce tree with no limbs along the bottom half of its trunk.
c. An abundant cone crop, produced every 5-7 years by white spruce trees.
d. A tree left standing as a seed tree in a clearcut.

10. Why do ravens come into Yukon communities in winter?

a. They feel safer once the tourists have left.
b. It's way too dark in the bush at that time of year.

c. They're scavengers, and the pickings are good in town in the winter.
d. The streetlights keep their feet warm.

11. What is a slimy sculpin?

a. A self-lubricating dissection tool for field work.
b. A tiny slug-like creature found in damp patches of tundra on the Yukon's North Slope.
c. The traditional villain in old-fashioned Christmas pageants.
d. A small fish that lives in streams across most of Canada.

12. Why are mushrooms like apples?

a. They are both fruiting bodies.
b. Both can be poisonous. (remember Snow White...)
c. Both ripen in summer.
d. All of the above.

13. What is the solar wind?

a. The south wind that blows warm air from the Pacific into the Yukon, often bringing a rapid temperature rise.
b. A pulse of energy blown outward from the sun.
c. A localized surface wind created by large arrays of solar cells.
d. A polite term for the nasty smell emanating from the feet of bison.

14. What is an American dipper?

a. A constellation of stars roughly the shape of the United States.
b. A specialized machine used for cleaning up oil spills.
c. A small shorebird that hangs out in winter on the ice beside open stretches of the Yukon River.
d. A wind generator designed to adjust its vertical angle to maximize energy from updrafts.

Answers: 1-b, 2-d, 3-d, 4-c, 5-a, 6-d, 7-e, 8-b, 9-c, 10-c, 11-d, 12-d, 13-b, 14-c.